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Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Letter dated 19 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Final Declaration of the Sixth Forum of Cuban Civil Society against the Embargo and the Annexation, dated 16 October 2009.

I should be grateful if you would have this Declaration circulated as a document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Pedro **Nuñez Mosquera**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 19 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Final Declaration of the Sixth Forum of Cuban Civil Society against the Embargo and the Annexation

16 October 2009

We, the participants in the Sixth Forum of Cuban Civil Society against the Embargo and the Annexation, meeting in Havana on 16 October 2009, and representing the full range of Cuban non-governmental organizations and associations active in the various sectors of our national life:

1. Reaffirm that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America is the chief obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development. The amount of direct economic damage inflicted on the Cuban people by the implementation of this policy had risen to more than US$ 96 billion by December 2008, representing about US$ 236.221 billion at current prices. These figures show neither the high intangible costs of the embargo nor the emotional damage it causes our people.

2. We condemn the fact that the chief victim of the embargo is the Cuban people. Two thirds of our population were born and have been living under the effects of this criminal policy. All spheres of national life are affected by its impact on the economy of the country, especially health and education, food security, animal health, sport, culture, transport, housing, the environment and religious institutions. The workings of the embargo particularly affect children, women, older adults and persons with disabilities.

3. We reaffirm that the embargo against Cuba is the most prolonged, cruel and unjust ever known in the history of humanity, and that it represents a veritable economic war which qualifies as an act of genocide. Its fundamental declared objective has been to destroy Cuba's constitutional order, depriving its people of sovereignty and of the exercise of their right to self-determination.

4. We emphasize that the embargo policy is not a bilateral affair. It is of a distinctly extraterritorial character which violates international law and international trade rules, and has intensified since the adoption of the Torricelli Act in 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act in 1996.

5. We emphasize that, from 1992 until now, the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations have supported a Cuban resolution calling for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America. Although the embargo is roundly condemned by the international community, the United States of America continues to ignore the 17 resolutions on the matter adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

6. We recognize that the measures taken by the administration of President Barack Obama represent a positive step, but they are extremely low-profile and limited, and do not contribute in any way to dismantling the criminal embargo policy. The complex fabric of laws and administrative provisions that constitute the legal basis of the embargo policy continues in full force and effect, including in

their extraterritorial dimension and in the continuing restriction of the freedom of movement of United States citizens.

7. We condemn the fact that in 2009 enforcement of the measures imposed under the embargo by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury has been even more unrelenting, and fines and other sanctions have been imposed with increasing frequency on alleged violators of the embargo laws.

8. We insist that the right of Cuban civil society organizations to maintain and develop cooperative relationships and exchanges with others in all countries must be fully respected, without the hostility and interference of the Government in Washington, D.C. We demand that the refusal of visas and other restrictions on cultural and academic exchanges with the people, scientists and representatives of women's organizations, trade unions and student associations and of religious, sporting, environmental and other groups, whether in the United States or any other country, be brought to an end. The restrictions imposed by the United States Government on the development of such relationships show that it is afraid citizens of that country may come to know the reality of Cuba. The restrictions also constitute a violation of their constitutional rights.

9. We emphasize that the implementation of this policy of embargo and total economic warfare is a flagrant and inadmissible violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Cuban people and that it also undermines the rights and freedoms of the American people themselves. In addition, it adversely affects citizens of third countries, because of the extraterritorial reach of this policy and the "laws" which supposedly underpin it.

10. We acknowledge and express our gratitude for the wide-ranging and effective solidarity shown to our country by thousands of civil society organizations throughout the world, and especially by organizations which represent the noblest sentiments of the American people, and we hold in high esteem the position taken by them and by Governments and international organizations which have not succumbed to pressure by the United States Government.

11. We urge civil society organizations in the various countries to publicize their solidarity and support, in whichever way they consider most effective, within their respective countries for the draft resolution to be considered for the eighteenth time on 28 October 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

12. We express our confidence that on 28 October the international community will once more categorically repudiate this genocidal policy.

13. We reiterate our determination to pursue the work of the Revolution, and to continue building an independent fatherland of solidarity and justice that will preserve the gains already made, will intensify our humanitarian work with other peoples of the world, and will defend to the last our socialist revolution and the unity of our people.

Ever onwards to victory!